

Visa and Residence Permit

Guidelines for International MAS Students (Continuing Education)

www.sce.ethz.ch



Have you been admitted to a MAS programme at ETH Zurich? The below guidelines will help you to complete the immigration formalities.

1. Do you need a visa?

The first step is to find out whether you need a visa to enter Switzerland. Citizens of the following EU or EFTA countries and nationals of Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Singapore are exempted from the visa obligation:¹

- › **EU countries:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden
- › **EFTA countries:** Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway

Nationals of all other countries must apply for a visa at the Swiss embassy or consulate responsible for their place of domicile². If you are unsure whether or not you need a visa, please ask at the local Swiss representation office. Please note that it normally takes 6-12 weeks to obtain a visa.

Important:

Although Switzerland has signed the Schengen/Dublin agreement, **a Schengen visa from another state continues to entitle the holder only to enter and travel through Switzerland, not to take up residence.** The latter requires a national "D" visa.

¹ This list is not complete, and entry requirements can change at any time. For the latest information, please see: https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/publiservice/weisungen-kreissschreiben/visa/liste1_staatsangehoerigkeit.html

² A list with the addresses of all Swiss representations abroad can be found at <http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/rebs.html>. Please note that visa applications must be submitted to an embassy or a consulate general (not a consulate).

2. Procedure for students with no visa obligation

If you are a national of an EU or EFTA country, you do not need to obtain a visa before entering Switzerland. However, you are obliged to register and apply for a residence permit at the Residents' Registration Office ("Kreisbüro") at your new place of domicile within 14 days of your arrival in Switzerland (see box below). Nationals of Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and UK do not require visas to enter Switzerland. However, to obtain a residence permit they must submit the same documents as students who are subject to a visa obligation. The difference is that you can hand in these documents at the Resident's Registration Office after arrival and will then directly get your residence permit.

Applying for residence permit

Even if you do not need a visa for your stay in Switzerland, you are still obliged to obtain a residence permit as soon as you arrive. You must apply for your residence permit at the Residents' Registration Office ("Kreisbüro") in charge of your place of domicile within 14 days of arrival.

Bring along:

- passport
- extended matriculation confirmation from ETH Zürich
- proof of sufficient financial means

For EU and EFTA citizens, written declaration of support by a family member or a written guarantee from a Swiss resident that living expenses during the stay in Switzerland will be covered; citizens of Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore require financial proof similar to that of students subject to a visa obligation.

A few weeks after you have submitted your documents you will receive an invitation to pick up your residence permit. The permit is usually valid for one year, but it can be extended if your studies take longer. Please note that you must submit updated proof of sufficient financial means for an extension.

3. Entry procedure for students with visa obligation

Your visa application must be accompanied by all of the documents in the list below. This list was prepared by ETH in cooperation with the Canton of Zurich Migration Office and meets official requirements. Please note that if any document is missing this may generate a delay of several weeks. If the Swiss representation office where you live requests any additional documents, enclose these too.

To study, you require a national "D" visa. This visa is valid for 3 months only and permits you to enter Switzerland once. After entry you will receive a residence permit for Switzerland, which also allows you to travel within the Schengen area for up to three months in every half-year.

Please also consult the visa FAQ's on the ETH website: <https://ethz.ch/en/studies/international/after-admission/visa-check/visa/faq.html>

Visa application documents (to be handed in at the nearest Swiss embassy or consulate general)

- › **Cover sheet for visa application (recommended)**
Please use the checklist on the ETH homepage¹ as the cover sheet for your visa application. It will help you to ensure that you have included all the documents requested and enable the Swiss authorities to locate relevant information more quickly.
- › **Visa application form**
The visa application form is provided free of charge by the local Swiss representation where you live, or can be downloaded from the internet in PDF format². Normally it must be submitted in triplicate. Most representations require you to appear in person; please find out about this in advance. Please note that a student visa is normally valid from 2-3 weeks before the start of the semester. If you wish to enter Switzerland earlier than this you must mention this in your visa application and provide detailed reasons.
- › **Passport**
Copy of the first few (relevant) pages of your passport. Your passport must be valid for at least 3 months beyond the planned duration of your stay!
Passport photographs
3 current passport photographs
- › **Admission to an ETH Zurich continuing education programme**
Enclose the official ETH Centre for Continuing Education "Admission to an MAS programme" ("Zulassung zum MAS Programm") document which you received from the School of Continuing Education. This document is sufficient for your visa application. (Please note that for visas in the context of a normal Master's degree programme the "Admission to Master's Programme" document is not sufficient.)

¹ <https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/main/education/international/pdf-en/checklist-visa-master.pdf>

² <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise/visumantragsformular.html> (Select "Long-term stays")

Curriculum vitae / language skills

Curriculum vitae in table form in German or English; list language skills in detail.

If the embassy requires confirmation that you do not need proof of a language for the respective continuing education programme, contact info@sce.ethz.ch.

- › **Diplomas / transcripts of school records**
Copies and certified translations into German or English.
- › **Letter of motivation / reasons why you want to study**
Please provide a (short) written personal statement in which you declare the reasons why you wish to study in Switzerland. Mention why the MAS programme is important for your professional future.
- › **Future plans**
Outline your plans after completing your studies (short - one or two sentences).
- › **Evidence of sufficient financial means**
You must produce evidence that you can finance your stay in Switzerland, for example bank statements and/or proof of scholarship decisions. The Canton of Zurich Migration Office requires confirmation from a *bank domiciled in Switzerland* (a Swiss bank or a foreign bank with a branch in Switzerland)³ that at the beginning of your stay and at the start of every extension you have funds available to you amounting to CHF 21,000.00. The account must be in your name and the account balance must be stated in Swiss Francs, Euros or US Dollars either on the bank statement or in an additional letter from the bank.

Financial evidence (bank statement):

Even large, internationally active banks are not acceptable if they have no branches in Switzerland! Examples of acceptable banks are Citibank, China Construction Bank, HSBC, Deutsche Bank (etc.). Please do NOT choose Raiffeisen Bank. Although it is on the list it has never been accepted.

The Zurich Migration Office is extremely strict about the financial requirement and this is where students make most mistakes. It is crucial that you follow the instructions above very carefully (most embassies do not know the detailed requirements of each of the 26 cantons in Switzerland and may not be able to tell you the correct requirements!)

Letters from parents declaring financial support are NOT accepted

For those who have relatives in Switzerland: An alternative is to submit a so-called "guarantee declaration".

³ Please see <https://www.finma.ch/en/~media/finma/dokumente/bewilligungstraeger/pdf/beh.pdf?la=en> for a list of banks with branches in Switzerland.

› **Confirmation of tuition fee payment (if required by the embassy)**

Many embassies require a confirmation of tuition fee payment. However, at ETH it is not possible to pay fees in advance. The letter found at <https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/main/education/internationales/pdf-en/confirmation-tuition-fees.pdf> confirms this. Please print it and enclose it with your visa application if required.

What happens next?

Your application for a student visa will be forwarded to the responsible authorities in Switzerland for their decision. The Migration Office of the respective canton reserves the right to ask for additional documents and information. You will be notified by post as soon as your visa is ready for collection.

Please be aware that admission to ETH Zurich does not automatically imply that the Migration Office will grant you a visa. **Under no circumstances should you enter Switzerland with a tourist visa!**

Visa refusal reasons:

Please note that there is no guarantee for a visa. The decision is the sole responsibility of the responsible migration office.

- Visa applications from students who already have a degree at the desired level may be rejected.
- The same applies to incomplete visa applications.

Applying for residence permit (non-EU/EFTA)

To study in Switzerland a residence permit is essential. This permit and your passport also entitle you to enter any Schengen state without an additional visa. You must apply for the residence permit in person at the Residents' Registration Office ("Kreisbüro") in the district where you live within 14 days of your arrival in Switzerland. Remember to bring your ETH confirmation of matriculation and your passport. Since 2011 biometric data have also been recorded for non-EU/EFTA citizens.

You will be invited to collect your permit within a few weeks of presenting your documents to the "Kreisbüro". The permit is normally valid for one year and can be renewed if your studies take longer. Please note that every extension must be accompanied by proof of financial means amounting to at least CHF 21,000.00.

Costs

You will pay three different fees during the visa procedure: fees to the consulate when you apply for a visa; a fee of CHF 95.00 to the Swiss canton responsible for your visa application (in this case the Zurich Migration Office) for the visa authorisation document; and a fee of CHF 182.00 for the residence permit when you register at the Residents' Registration Office ("Kreisbüro") in Zurich.

4. Employment (Canton Zurich)

During the semester you are allowed to undertake paid employment for a maximum of 15 hours per week. Please check with your program coordination if it will have time to work during your programme.

During the lecture-free period you may work up to 100%. In both cases all non-EU/EFTA students must have a work permit, which can only be obtained after the residence permit has been issued. For further information, see <https://ethz.ch/en/studies/international/after-arrival/employment.html>

Useful links

- › State Secretariat for Migration: <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home.html>
- › Canton of Zurich Migration Office: <http://www.ma.zh.ch/internet/sicherheitsdirektion/migrationsamt/de/service/international.html>
- › Cantonal and communal authorities address list: https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/ueberuns/kontakt/kantonale_behoerden/adressen_kantone_und.html
- › Housing Office of ETH and the University Zurich: <https://www.wohnen.ethz.ch/en>
- › Health insurance requirements in Switzerland: <https://ethz.ch/en/studies/international/after-arrival/health-insurance.html>
- › Visa FAQ's on the ETH website: <https://ethz.ch/en/studies/international/after-admission/visa-check/visa/faq.html>

Please note: This information is meant for information purposes only. No responsibility is taken for the correctness of this information. The rules and regulations may have changed in the meantime. For legally binding information please contact the respective authorities.

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Entry to the Schengen Area / Visa Procedure

The following information may be useful if you are planning to visit Switzerland or if you are expecting a visitor from abroad.

Useful information
Information on general entry requirements is available online Entry .
For multiple entries/departures to and from the Schengen area (including Switzerland) we recommend you consult Calculation of short-term stays/short-stay calculator . The page includes a short-stay calculator.
If you would like to work in Switzerland or plan to stay longer than 90 days, please contact the competent cantonal migration office
Validity of travel document Regardless of whether you require a visa, you must be in possession of a valid travel document recognised by the Swiss authorities (see List 1, Annex 1). Your travel document: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• must be valid for at least 3 months after the date on which you plan to leave Switzerland and• must have been issued within the last 10 years.

Do I Need a Visa?

Information on visa requirements for your nationality is available at [Link](#)

No

What do I need to keep in mind when entering Switzerland?

Your stay in the Schengen area (including Switzerland) may not exceed 90 days in any 180-day period.

Please note the [Entry requirements](#) for Switzerland.

If you enter Switzerland without a visa, you may be questioned by the border authorities on the reason for your stay and on your financial means. You may be refused entry if there is any doubt as to the reasons for your stay, or if you do not have sufficient financial means. In the case of the latter, you may be required to submit a declaration of sponsorship by a guarantor at the border.

If you are travelling to Switzerland to visit someone, it may be helpful to have a personal invitation from your host to show to the border authorities or to be met by your host at the airport. This is not mandatory, however.

Yes

Where should I submit my visa application?

If you require a visa, you can submit your application to the [Swiss embassy or consulate](#) responsible for your place of residence

Where can I obtain an application form?

You can download the [Application form](#) from our website or obtain the application form free of charge from the appropriate Swiss embassy or consulate.

What documents do I have to enclose with the application? How much does the visa cost?

You should enclose your travel document, proof of health insurance and any other documents to support the purpose of your visit. You can obtain information on the documentation required and visa fees on the [website](#) of the appropriate embassy/consulate.

Do I need to submit a declaration of sponsorship?

The embassy/consulate will decide whether you need to submit a declaration of sponsorship (see information sheet *Declaration of Sponsorship*).

Issuance of Visa

Entry to the Schengen area

Your stay in the Schengen area (including Switzerland) may not exceed 90 days in any 180-day period.

However, you must comply with the period of validity entered on the visa sticker and the number of days you are allowed to stay.

Visa Refusal

What rights do I have?

If your visa application is refused, you can appeal.